



Tallil Times

IN BRIEF

Avoid delinquency charges on GTC, file travel voucher

There are two avenues to file accrual vouchers to prevent delinquency charges on your government travel card. Visit the finance office here or go to <https://www.my.af.mil>, then click on "Top Viewed Items," click on "Virtual Military Personnel Flight (vMPF)," verify your e-mail address, go to bottom right "Helpful Hints," click on "Accrual Travel Voucher," click on 'Fill Out Request' on the left side of page and fill out the document. For more information, call finance at 445-2227.

Read, follow base policies

All new Ali Base residents should read the policy letters on the base intranet at <http://intranet/PolicyLetters/Policy.htm> upon arrival.

Contact lenses policy

All non-flyers wearing contact lenses must have permission from their squadron commander to wear contact lenses. To print a permission form go to the "Medical Info Link" on the base intranet at <http://intranet/emeds/> and click on "Contact Lens form." Read and sign this form, then get your squadron commander's signature. Bring the signed form to the clinic to be placed in your medical records. For more information, call Lt. Col. LeRoy White, 777th Chief of Flight Medicine, at 445-2267.

DCU sleeves improper wear

In accordance with the 332nd AEW Instruction 36-2903, Feb. 1 DCU sleeves will be worn down. "Cuffing" is not authorized.

Tallil Times back issues

Back issues of the Tallil Times are available to 407th AEG personnel on the shared drive at S:\407 AEG\Public\PA\Tallil Times Archive.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Darcie Ildapao

Brig. Gen. Blair E. Hansen, 332d Air Expeditionary Wing commander, Balad Air Base, Iraq, passes the 407th Air Expeditionary Group flag to Colonel Michael J. Nowak during a formal change of command ceremony at the Big Top.

New CC assumes command

By Tech. Sgt. Melissa Phillips

407th AEG Public Affairs

Col. Michael J. Nowak assumed command of the 407th Air Expeditionary Group from Col. Dennis M. Diggett Wednesday.

"I'm happy to be here," said Colonel Nowak, who is currently deployed from Eglin Air Force Base, Fla., where he is the vice commander at the 96th Air Base Wing, Air Armament Center.

"Air expeditionary force three and four did a great job of helping to stand up a new Iraqi Air Force, taking care of the base infrastructure and improving the quality of life on Ali Base," Colonel Nowak said.

During the former commander's tenure, the men and women of Ali Base made it possible to launch more than one hundred EA-6B prowler combat sorties, more than 500 coalition helicopter combat sorties, 150 Italian predator missions, and more than one

hundred Scathe View Surveillance and Reconnaissance missions.

They also provided security and logistic support for 7.5 million election ballots and associated equipment used to conduct the first free elections in Iraq in 50 years.

"We have a unique opportunity to be a part of history in the making," said Colonel Nowak. "In 1787, our forefather's were writing and passing the first constitution in the United States. As citizens, we benefit from the freedoms and quality of life that piece of paper provides.

"It's an exciting time to be here," he said. "We are watching the birth of a nation."

No stranger to the area, he's spent time on the U.S. Central Command Air Forces staff along with two tours at Prince Sultan Air Base, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, one as the 4404th Operations Support Squadron



A call to action - Operation Iraqi Freedom

By Chief Master Sgt. James A. Lawrence

407th AEG superintendent (AEF 3/4)

Former superintendent speaks about joint environment, bonding with fledgling Iraqi AF

We answered the call. Since the beginning of time, people have been drawn to far off places in distant lands for the opportunity to be part of something greater than one's self and a part of history in the making.

This is Operation Iraqi Freedom, a giant effort with a single purpose – bring freedom and security to the people of Iraq.

For many of us, this is our first trip to a far-off land. For others, it's one of many such trips. Whether it's your first or tenth, you're here.

You left behind your family, friends, and a comfortable life for a dry, dusty patch of sand and dirt in southern Iraq for a place called Ali Base.

We're not alone here. Our fellow brothers and sisters in arms are spread far and wide throughout this country. Like you, they answered the call, and many of them have made the ultimate sacrifice.

For the first time, many of us have had to share our desert home (Bedrock City) and our toys (your fitness center & morale facilities) with others. Uncomfortable at first, we soon discovered the world and its inhabitants are all fundamentally the same. We have seen the Dutch, Italians, Romanians, Estonians, Japanese, Polish, British, Australians, El Salvadorans, Ukrainians, South Koreans, and most importantly, the new Iraqi Air Force.

I arrived here Jan. 21 with one goal in mind: focus all my energy on the enlisted men and women of Ali Base. This priority remained unchanged.

Little did I know, but one week prior to my arrival, a new Iraqi Air Force was born. Sixteen days later, Jan 30, the people of Iraq held their first democratic elections in more than 50 years. Finally, people were allowed to select candidates of their own choosing without fear of reprisal.

Each of us must ask ourselves why we are here. The common refrain, "Mission First, People Always" remains our top priority. But what do we hope to achieve in this great

See Call to Action, Page 4

SVS troops help create lifetime memories

Maj. Michael J. Ponder

407th Services Squadron commander

We, here at Services, are ready to get our rotation off to a powerful start, maintain the positive momentum and wind it up with greater engine performance going out than we had coming in.

Your next question would be: what's your plan for getting this done in the next four months?

Well my fellow Airmen, I'm mighty glad you asked that question, and this is our answer.

We've already got off to a powerful start because of your energy, involvement and input. Keep it up. We have many regularly scheduled events which you will see or hear of throughout Ali Base. We do this by posting information on bulletin boards, spreading the word at all events and around the base, sending out base-wide reminder e-mails, notifying the first sergeants and commanders, displaying What's Happening at the Hot Spot, Fitness Center, Lodging and the Big Top.

Communication is a key, but without your active ignition it won't work. We don't just need you to show up, we need you to be a spark plug and bring a friend, co-worker or even someone you don't know with you. This is not your time to be a quiet or shy, this is your time to kick it into gear, get involved and get the heck out of your little,

4 x 4 tent space.

Our first visit from the Ambassadors of Hollywood showed our ability to turn out and start the engines. Every week at Bingo, we seem to fuel up the bus with more folks flowing in to win prizes, heckle the bingo caller about the terrible jokes or just come to socialize. Saturday night's Hip Hop dance continued to reflect your need to move around, break it down and rotate your tires on the dance floor.

Maintaining the positive momentum is up to all of us. If you hear some engine noises such as complaining about being bored and saying, "it's just too hot" or general whining, bring them out for some Services cheese in the form of a smile and an event tune-up. If you don't know what's going on stop by the fitness center or Hot Spot and ask for the service manager. Four months will be over before you know it, so don't wait four months to check the oil and change the filter.

When it's time to leave we know our job was done right, not by your extreme need to vacate the premises or get the heck out of Dodge, but rather by your improved fitness, positive moral for the incoming folks and funny stories about the sands of Ali Base. Make every minute you spend here count and it will be something you will tell and make up stories about for a lifetime. We at Services look forward to seeing you all.



The Tallil Times

EDITORIAL STAFF

Col. Michael J. Nowak
Commander, 407th AEG

Tech. Sgt. Melissa Phillips
Editor/Chief, Public Affairs

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graphs unless otherwise indicated.

The TALLIL TIMES accepts stories, photographs and commentaries, which may be submitted to the PA staff located in the group headquarters building or can be sent directly to the newspaper at tallil.times@tlab.aorcentaf.af.mil

Deadline for publication is 2 p.m. Thursday before the week of publication. For more information, call 445-2318, or e-mail the staff.



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Melissa Phillips

Hot Potato

Left: Staff Sgt. Marvin Rhodeman, 407th Expeditionary Services Squadron deployed from McConnell Air Force Base, Kan., hands Senior Airman Candace Sloan, 407th ESVS deployed from McConnell AFB, a sandbag Monday during a force protection improvement initiative here to increase the height of sandbags around Bedrock City tents. **Right:** Maj. Mike Ponder, 407 ESVS commander, passes a sandbag to Airman 1st Class Amber Reim, 407 ESVS deployed from McConnell. The extra sandbags add additional layers of blast fragmentation protection to all residents. If residents hear a boom or siren blast in the future, they're instructed to drop to the floor of their tents, lay on their stomach to protect their vital organs, cover their neck with their hands and remain in place until "All Clear" is broadcast over the giant voice. For more information on force protection cautionary measures or issues, call the antiterrorism/force protection office at 445-2464 and 2465.

New CC's outlook

Continued from Page 1

commander and the other as the 363rd Expeditionary Support Group commander.

Up to the challenge, Colonel Nowak will lead Team Ali to continue assisting stabilization of the region in order to help the Iraqi people pass the Iraqi constitution in August and hold new elections shortly thereafter.

He plans to do that by encouraging everyone to establish a battle rhythm, subscribe to the mantra, "Leave it better

than when we found it," and nurture ties with our Army brethren and our new Iraqi Air Force friends.

"We are a unique area in the Southwest Asia Area of Responsibility in that we have a front seat to learn from other services and cultures on this base through our daily interactions."

A command pilot with 2,600 flight hours, he's flown RF-4C, T-37 and T-38 aircraft. Although he enjoys taking to the skies, he's also witnessed battle plans implemented at two combined air operations centers: Chief of Relocation Division/C-3 Director of Operations, Balkans CAOC and Director of Operations, CAOC-5, Poggio Renatico, Italy.

"I've studied the Middle East, and I've wanted to come to Iraq for a long time.

"I'm looking forward to the challenge of helping stand up a new Iraqi Air Force, and I look forward to doing that with you, members of Ali Base."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Darcie Ildapao

Col. Michael J. Nowak, 407th Air Expeditionary Group commander, visits with Ali Base members Wednesday after his change of command ceremony.

Chief speaks about freedom, taking part in history

Continued from Page 2

undertaking known as Operation Iraqi Freedom?

To answer that question, we must understand something about the people and land in which we currently live.

The Iraqi people want two things more than anything else – safety & security. They say without this, nothing else can take place or will truly matter.

The Iraqi people desperately want to control their own destinies. They want to live in a democratic society free from corruption and violence. They want to be able to feed and clothe their families, travel and have a true sense of security.

Many Iraqis remain hopeful, but many are mentally and physically exhausted after 35 years of brutal dictatorship, three wars and

a devastated economy. They're impatient for progress.

So remember, what we accomplish here at Ali Base does truly matter. Our presence in Iraq is vital to the future security of this fledgling democracy and its people.

I remember my first encounter with an Iraqi chief master sergeant. We sat opposite one another at a table and spoke for several minutes through an interpreter. Then abruptly, he looked me straight in the eye and said, "where were you 15 years ago?"

Puzzled, I asked him via the interpreter what he meant.

He said, "for years, all the Iraqi people have been told you Americans were monsters and that you were nothing but evil-doers. But I

now know it was all lies! You are all just like us."

JUST LIKE US means we exhibit compassion, friendship, hard work, creativity and ingenuity.

We all have a critical mission to perform here at Ali Base: secure the base, maintain and manage our airfield and airspace, launch and fly aircraft, constantly improve our facilities and the myriad of programs and processes we touch daily.

But, remember to take this one step further. If we truly believe in what OIF stands for, we must do everything in our power to model freedom and to help Iraqis understand freedom comes at a high cost.

It requires patience, perseverance and eternal vigilance.

That isn't something handed to us but it's something that is earned.

The Iraqi people could have no better example than the men and women of Ali Base.

Finally, don't hesitate to befriend a member of Iraqi 23rd Squadron.

Tell them about what freedom means to you. It may be the best thing you ever do for the advancement of liberty in this part of the world.



Photo by Airman 1st Class Jennifer Wallen

"The Iraqi people want two things more than anything else – safety & security. They say without this, nothing else can take place or will truly matter."

- Chief Master Sgt. James A. Lawrence, 407th AEG superintendent

Chief Master Sgt. James A. Lawrence, 407th Air Expeditionary Group superintendent, poses with a Bedouin girl during Operation Reach Out May 12. Chief Lawrence and other Ali Base Airmen traveled outside the base to distribute much-needed clothes and supplies to the locals.

Tallil Talks ...

What are your goals for this deployment?



Staff Sgt. Adam Roehl, 777th EAMXS
"I would like to win an award and work out."



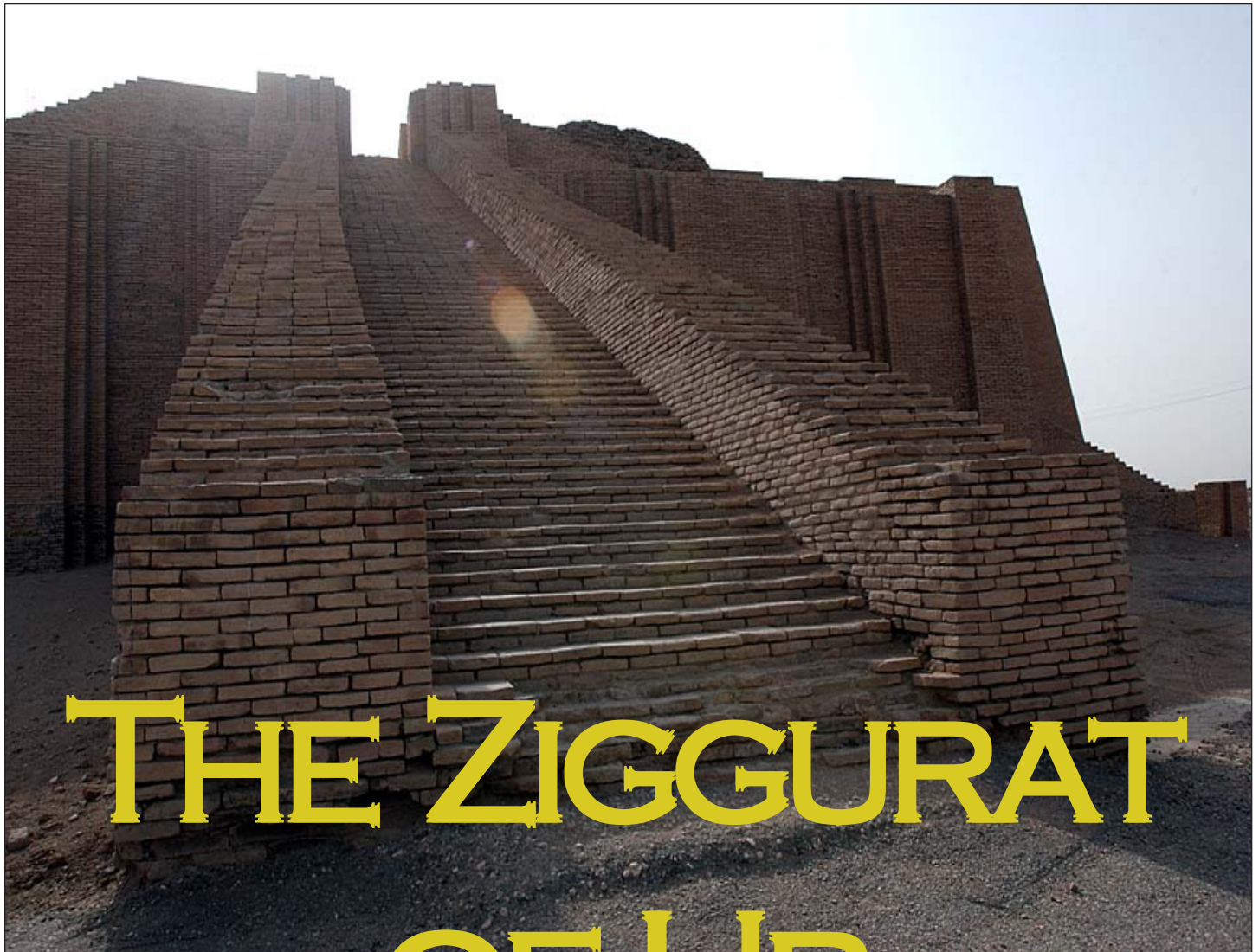
Airman 1st Class Jesse Beaver, 777th EAMXS
"I work in CE control, so I want to maintain a working base and get the job done ASAP."



Master Sgt. Samuel Olvera, 407th ECS
"My goal is to make it better than when we got here."



Maj. Chuck Perry, 407th AEG chapel
"To help Airmen deal with conflicts and help them have a personal relationship with God."



THE ZIGGURAT OF UR

By Master Sgt. Don Perrien

407th AEG Public Affairs (AEF 1/2)

More than 4,000 years ago, worshipers of the moon god Nanna living near the ancient city of Ur constructed the monument we call the Ziggurat. Rising more than 40 feet above the ground, it is the best preserved structure of its type in the world.

The Ziggurat was built in three stages taking hundreds of years to complete. The monument's construction was begun by a ruler named Ur-Nammu and completed by Shol-Gi of the Third Dynasty.

The structure was unearthed in the mid 1800s by the British consul J. E. Taylor, who partly uncovered the Ziggurat. Unlike the pyramids of Egypt, the Ziggurat is a solid structure. There are no inner passages or chambers for burying former rulers.

However, there is a nearby royal cemetery in the adjacent city of Ur which was later excavated in 1922 by Sir Leonard Wooley.

The Ziggurat has been restored several times during its life, with the last known construction work taking place during the 1960's. Most of the exposed outer surface of the structure visitors see today is from the work done just 40 years ago.

The first two layers of the Ziggurat are relatively well preserved; however, the upper level is no longer standing. Originally there may have been a small temple to the moon god on the upper level; however, archeologists speculate the mound of rubble at the top of the structure may have resulted from the practice of destroying the temple annually and creating a new one each year.

The original purpose of the Ziggurat is lost in mystery. Recovered cuneiform tables

describe rituals of prayer and sacrifice, but little is known about the religion as a whole.

The life of the Ziggurat is closely tied with the city of Ur itself. The city is considered a cradle of civilization, playing a key role in defining urban culture and serving as an example for future city designs. Several thousand years ago, the path of the Euphrates River flowed very close to the city's walls. Because of its location, Ur became a hub for the development of commerce and the seat of political influence for the entire area.

The city's early history was marked by three separate dynasties in a single millenia, with the first occurring before 3,000 B.C. and the last ending around 2,000 B.C.

Excavations in the area dating from the

See Ziggurat, Page 6



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Maria J. Bare

Ziggurat

Continued from Page 5

second dynasty have shown the citizens of Ur were instrumental in discovering new methods to work metal, especially the mining and smelting of gold. Later excavations dating from the third dynasty show the city developed into a cultural capital featuring works of sculpture and literature as the local rulers expanded their empire several thousand miles long across an area from the Near East to parts of Asia Minor.

The more commonly known name of the city for many people is the city's biblical name, Ur of the Chaldees. This name refers to the Chaldeans, who settled in the area about 900 B.C. Passages in the Bible's Book of Genesis describe Ur as the starting point of the migration westward to Palestine for the family of Abraham around 1,900 B.C.

During the Chaldean dynasty, King Nebuchadnezzar II ruled

over another period of construction at the city of Ur. The last Babylonian king of the period, Nabonidus, who reigned from 556-539 B.C. appointed his eldest daughter high priestess at Ur. During this period, he and his daughter repaired and rebuilt many of the temples and entirely remodeled the Ziggurat.

However less than a century later, Babylonia came under the control of Persia, and Ur began its decline. By the 4th century B.C., the city stood nearly barren and empty. Historians speculate the change was most likely due to a combination of continuing warfare in the area combined with a shift in the course of the Euphrates River decreasing the city's value as a trade route.

While the original inhabitants of Ur have faded into history, the Ziggurat of Ur stands a remarkable window into humanity's past culture.

The original article ran in the Dec. 10 edition of the Tallil Times



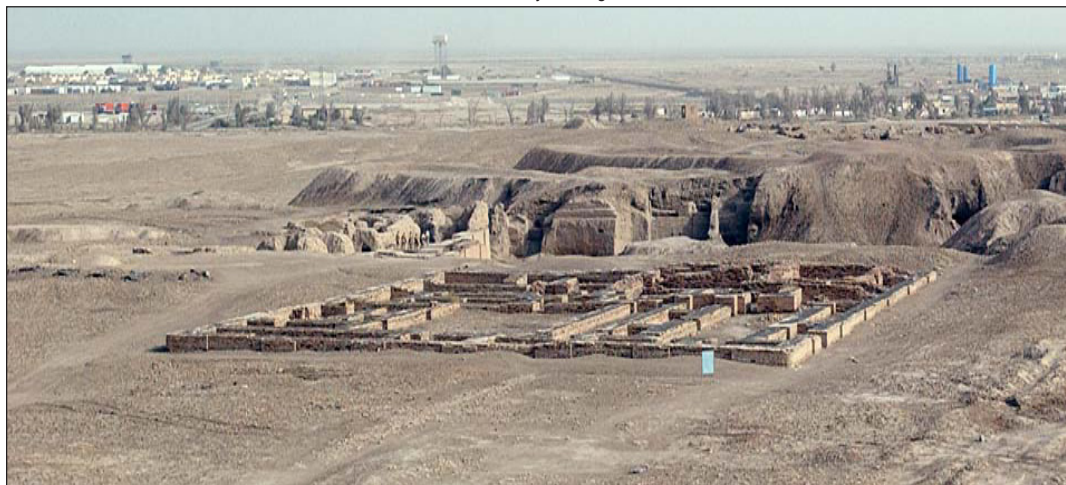
Photo from British Museum Archives

(Facing Page) The stairway of the Ziggurat reaches over 40 feet to the top of the structure which is more than 4,000 years old.

(Upper Left) Archways in the city of Ur demonstrate the innovative architectural techniques developed by the city's inhabitants thousands of years ago.

(Above) The unearthed Ziggurat was researched by several teams of archeologists during the 1850's and 1920s.

(Left) The city of Ur today, as it sits alongside Ali Base in Southern Iraq.





Rumsfeld announces BRAC: 5 active, 7 reserve installations named

By Master Sgt. Mitch Gettle

Air Force Print News

5/13/2005 - WASHINGTON — The secretary of defense released the Department of Defense's Base Realignment and Closure recommendations during a press conference May 13.

The recommendations, if fully implemented, will generate an estimated net savings of nearly \$50 billion for DOD over the next two decades, officials said. The Air Force would save an estimated \$2.6 billion through 2011, and a total of \$14.6 billion over the next 20 years.

"The BRAC recommendations announced by the Department of Defense enable us to take full advantage of the expertise of each component of our total force — active duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve and civilian — as we continue adapting the Air Force to meet the challenges of a dynamic global environment," said Michael L. Dominguez, acting secretary of the Air Force. "These

recommendations strengthen our ability to coordinate, integrate and operate as part of the joint warfighting team, but I also know they will significantly (affect) many people in the Air Force and in communities around these bases. We're committed to providing all the help we can to work through this together."

This list of recommended Air Force closures included five active-duty and seven reserve component installations.

The purpose of the DOD's recommendations is to make the most efficient and effective use of all the department's resources, to improve operational efficiency, to save taxpayer dollars, to advance transformation and enhance the combat effectiveness of the military forces, officials said.

These recommendations will not be implemented until after hearings and review by the BRAC commission, approval by the president and congress sometime in November. Additionally, 62 Air Force installations face varying levels of realignment under the proposal.

"The recommendations ...will generate an estimated net savings of nearly \$50 billion for DOD over the next two decades."

Recommended Installations

Air Force Research Laboratory Mesa, Ariz.

Brooks City-Base, Texas.

Cannon Air Force Base, N.M.

Ellsworth AFB, S.D.

General Mitchell Air Reserve Station, Wis.

Kulis Air Guard Station, Alaska.

Mansfield-Lahm AGS, Ohio.

Niagara ARS, N.Y.

Onizuka Air Force Station, Calif.

Otis Air National Guard Base, Mass.

Pittsburgh ARS, Pa.

W.K. Kellogg AGS, Mich.

For the complete list, visit www.af.mil/brac.

Identify This



KNOW WHAT THIS IS? Each week, the "Tallil Times" staff takes a photo from around Ali Base. If you can identify the object and location, shoot us an e-mail at: tallil.times@tlab.aorcentaf.af.mil. with "Identify This" in the subject block. The winner gets their name printed in the Tallil Times. Congratulations to Staff Sgt. James Gressik, 777th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance squadron, who correctly identified last week's Tallil Times photo of a computer speaker.

Muscle Beach Events

Today, Yoga,
5:30 a.m.

Saturday, Open

Sunday, Open

Monday, Taebo,
5:30 a.m.

Tuesday, Tai Chi,
5:30 a.m.

Wednesday, Taebo,
5:30 a.m.

Thursday, Tai Chi,
5:30 a.m.

May 27, Yoga,
5:30 a.m.

Celebs visit Ali, entertain troops



Photos by Master Sgt. Mark Bucher

Ambassadors of Hollywood

Above: Dean Cain, infamous from the hit television series "Lois and Clark: The Adventures of Superman," signs autographs for Master Sgt. Ricky D. Harting, 407th Expeditionary Service Squadron deployed from Laughlin Air Force Base, Texas; 1st Lt. Jennifer Mack, 407th Air Expeditionary Group protocol officer deployed from Kirtland AFB, N.M. and 1st Lt. Sherry Graham, 407th AEG PERSCO officer deployed from McConnell, Kan., May 12. Mr. Cain has recently starred in "Out of Time" with Denzel Washington and Eva Mendes, the high profile bio-pic based on the Scott Peterson trial called the "Perfect Husband," and the "Clubhouse" opposite Christopher Lloyd. He recently wrapped up production on an independent film called "Lost."

Below: Capt. Greg Whitaker, 407th Expeditionary Communications Squadron deployed from Scott AFB, Ill., and Airman 1st Class Wes Ackerman, 407th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron deployed from Minot AFB, N.D., escort model and actress Amanda Swiston, during an entertainment event at the Big Top. Mrs. Swiston is most well-known for her performance as the french maid in American Wedding. She's also played a role in the comedy "Girl Next Door," and is currently filming the lead in an independent film called "Freezerburn," which is scheduled for release later this year. To learn about upcoming services events, go to <http://intranet/ESVS/SVShome.htm>.



Listen up Warfighters ...

Keep hydrated, drink plenty of water

407th AEG Warrior of the Week

Senior Airman Matthew Monroe



Unit: 407th Expeditionary Communications Squadron
Home unit: 22nd Communications Squadron, McConnell Air Force Base, Kan.

Why other warriors say he's a warrior: Airman Monroe set up a remote installation server that cut the time it takes to load computer software in half. He also fixed inconsistencies in network configuration and improved network performance base-wide by 66 percent.

What is your most memorable Air Force experience: I don't have one individual experience; however, the experience I most value is completing my job to the best of my ability, which may allow Airmen who are in a more dangerous situation than I to come home safe.

ESWS Presents

Just for fun

Tonight, Combat Bingo, 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dominoes, 8 p.m.

Sunday, 8-ball, 8 p.m.

Monday, Chess, 2 p.m.

Tuesday, Ping Pong, 8 p.m.

Wednesday, Checkers, 8 p.m.

Thursday, Jenga, 7:30 p.m.

May 27, Combat Bingo, 7:30 p.m.

Cricket

Viewer's Choice
 Everyday at 2, 4, 6 and 10 p.m.



Today

Noon, *The Net*
 8 p.m., *The Net*
 Midnight, *The Net*

Saturday

Noon, *Star Wars* marathon

Sunday

Noon, *Austin Powers Part 1*
 4 p.m., *Austin Powers Part 2*
 8 p.m., *Austin Powers Part 3*

Monday

Noon, *Barbershop*
 6 p.m., *Barbershop*
 8 p.m., *Barbershop*

Tuesday

Noon, *Blade*
 6 p.m., *Blade*
 8 p.m., *Blade*

Wednesday

Noon, *Coyote Ugly*
 6 p.m., *Coyote Ugly*
 8 p.m., *Coyote Ugly*

Thursday

Noon, *Elf*
 4 p.m., *Elf*
 8 p.m., *Elf*

May 27

Noon, *Full Metal Jacket*
 4 p.m., *Full Metal Jacket*
 8 p.m., *Full Metal Jacket*

OUT AND ABOUT



Worship is at the 407th Air Expeditionary Group Oasis of Peace Chapel, unless otherwise noted. The chapel is open 24 hours a day for prayer and reflection. For details on worship opportunities, call 445-2006.

Sunday

7:30 a.m., Catholic Confession at chapel/chaplain's Office
8 a.m., Roman Catholic Mass at chapel
8 a.m., Church of Christ service at religious activity center
9:30 a.m., Traditional Protestant service at chapel
10 a.m., Latter Day Saints service at Army RAC
10:30 a.m., Roman Catholic Mass at Camp Cedar
12:30 p.m., Gospel service at Big Top
6 p.m., Contemporary Praise Team rehearsal at chapel
7 p.m., Contemporary Worship service at chapel

Monday

6 p.m., Weekday Mass at chapel
6:30 p.m., Gospel service prayer hour at conference room
7:30 p.m., Gospel choir rehearsal at Big Top
7:30 p.m., Discipleship Bible study/fellowship at chapel annex

Tuesday

7 a.m., Weekday Mass at chapel
Noon, Church of Christ lunch/study at RAC
7 p.m., Right of Christian Initiation of Adults at conf

room

7:30 p.m., Bible study (Book of Acts) at chapel
8 p.m., Christian discipleship study at chapel annex
Wednesday
5 p.m., Catholic choir rehearsal at chapel
6 p.m., Weekday Mass at chapel
8 p.m., 40 Days of Purpose Bible study at chapel annex

Thursday

7 a.m., Weekday Mass at chapel
6:30 p.m., Catholic Choir Rehearsal at chapel
7 p.m., LDS study at RAC
7:45 p.m., Gospel Service Bible study at chapel

Friday

11:45 a.m., Islamic prayer at Army RAC
6 p.m., Weekday Mass at chapel

6:30 p.m., Jewish Service at RAC

7 p.m., Church of Christ Bible study at RAC

7:30 p.m., Gospel choir rehearsal at chapel

Saturday

5:30 p.m., Catholic confession at chapel/chaplain's Office
6 p.m., Catholic Vigil Mass at chapel
7 p.m., Contemporary Praise Team rehearsal at chapel

From the chapel

THE TROUBLE TREE

The carpenter I hired to help me restore an old farmhouse had just finished a rough first day on the job. A flat tire made him lose an hour of work, his electric saw quit, and now his ancient pickup truck refused to start. While I drove him home, he sat in stony silence.

On arriving, he invited me in to meet his family. As we walked toward the front door, he paused briefly at a small tree, touching the tips of the branches with both hands. When opening the door he underwent an amazing transformation. His tanned face was wreathed in smiles and he



hugged his two small children and gave his wife a kiss. Afterward he walked me to the car. We passed the tree and my curiosity got the better of me.

I asked him about what I had seen him do earlier.

"Oh, that's my trouble tree," he replied.

"I know I can't help having troubles on the job, but one thing's for sure, troubles don't belong in the house with my wife and the children. So I just hang them on the tree every night when I come home. Then in the morning I pick them up again."

He paused. "Funny thing is," he smiled, "When I come out in the morning to pick 'em up, there ain't nearly as many as I remember hanging up the night before."

Article courtesy of the 407th Air Expeditionary Group chapel's office.